Sa Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

TRIBAL HERITAGE

794 The second main factor in producing tension is that the
177 Christian becomes a member of a community that is different
178 from the tribal community into which he was born and different
158 from any other within his experience. He may know of one or two Santals who have been influenced by the Bengal form of Vaishnavism and have adopted some strange customs in consequence, and he is familiar with the semi-secret society formed by the *ojha* and his disciples, but neither of these provides any analogy with the society of which he now becomes a member.
794 The preaching of the Christian Faith has been pioneered by
797 European missionaries, and up to the present the direction of the
177 affairs of the Christian Church has remained in the hands of
178 missionaries to a greater extent than in many other parts of
152 India. Their apparent superiority tends to make the village Christian belittle his own ideas and institutions. Their superior wealth and beneficence tempt him to rely on their help, and sometimes produce resentment when the help is withheld for a reason which he is quite unable to appreciate, the desire to make him "independent". Furthermore, Santal Christians are linked
794 through the Church with Christians who come from other com-
177 munities. This fusion of diverse elements produces strain at
178 times. There has been no difficulty from the first in taking common meals, and this has safeguarded the witness of the
[264] Sacrament of Holy Communion to the unity of believers in Christ. On the other hand, many Christians shrink from contact with the corpse of a non-Santal Christian. Near the village of Samadi there used to be one household of Christians who were of Bhuiya stock. I was on tour in the area when the
[264] old grandmother died. She was buried in the Christian burial ground, here, as in most villages, a piece of waste-land within the holding of one of the Santal Christians, but none of the local Santal Christians would touch the corpse. The persistence of such ideas varies, one might say, in inverse proportion to the degree of contact which the local community enjoys with other Christians. Samadi is in a far corner of the area and such an incident would not occur nearer to the centre. This can be further illustrated by the fusion that has been
794 gradually taking place in the Christian community through
177 intermarriage. Although the village Christian abhors the thought
178 of intermarriage, a few individuals have ignored the rule of tribal endogamy and have contracted marriages against which there
582 are no Christian sanctions. Those who have done so would not find it possible to continue to live in the village community, and